

AoA Older Americans Month 2008 Program Champion



Project: “Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty” (Project C.A.R.E.)

Organization: NC Department of Health & Human Services – Division of Aging & Adult Services

Program Description

The North Carolina Alzheimer’s Demonstration Program, Project C.A.R.E: “Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty” uses a family consultant model to provide consumer-directed respite care and comprehensive support to dementia caregivers. *The goal of the program is to increase quality, access, choice, and use of respite and support services to low-income rural and minority families caring for a person with dementia at home or within a hospital setting.* Through the integration of dementia-capable services and the development of family-centered and caregiver-focused community care networks, Project C.A.R.E. can help create a seamless, coordinated delivery system that is responsive to the needs, values and preferences of Alzheimer’s families.

Project C.A.R.E. is administered through the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) with expert consultation and technical assistance provided by the Duke Aging Center Family Support Program. Project C.A.R.E. is implemented at the local level through Family Consultants employed by and/or supported through the local Alzheimer’s Association. The program is currently based within the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services and two area offices of the Western Carolina Alzheimer’s Chapter. The Mountain Area office in Asheville serves as the project training and data management center for all new and existing program sites and staff.

Project C.A.R.E. employs Family Consultants with expertise in Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders. The Consultants visit the homes of referred dementia caregivers in crises and offer timely, individualized assessment, guidance, counseling, support, advocacy, coaching and education. Their aim is to match families with the most appropriate and preferred local respite and community services tailored to their unique situation and needs. Through Project C.A.R.E., dementia caregivers may spend up to \$2000 a year toward respite services. Families are able to choose among a full continuum of consumer-directed care options, including adult day services, group respite, private or agency in-home care, and overnight residential respite. To date, Project C.A.R.E. has served over 1700 families through 116 local providers. According to recent surveys, 95% of respondents reported that Project C.A.R.E. services helped them with a wide variety of caregiving issues. Approximately 92% of client families reported that Project C.A.R.E. services allowed them to provide care at home longer and 94% rated their satisfaction with the overall program above average or excellent.

Project C.A.R.E. connects families to the NC Family Caregiver Support Program, Aging and Disability Resource Connections (ADRC), Hospice and other caregiver-focused initiatives creating a strong network of community support for Alzheimer's families. This comprehensive system of care strengthens the family's capacity to manage the ongoing and diverse challenges inherent in caring for a person with dementia, enabling families to provide care at home longer.

The U.S. Administration on Aging's Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States Program is the primary funder of Project C.A.R.E. to date. These federal funds have been leveraged through grants provided by private foundations (e.g., Sisters of Mercy, Kate B. Reynolds, United Way and Centura Bank) as well as supplemental funds provided by local Family Caregiver Support Programs.

For more information visit <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/aging/ad/NCAIzDemo.htm> or contact Karisa Derence, at (919) 733-0440 ext#220 or via e-mail at karisa.derence@ncmail.net.